

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-9 are pending in this application. Claims 6-9 are added by this amendment. By means of the present amendment, claims 1-5 are amended including for better conformance to U.S. practice. Further amendments include correcting certain informalities noted upon review of the claims. Claims 1-5 were not amended in order to address issues of patentability and Applicant respectfully reserves all rights under the Doctrine of Equivalents.

In the Final Office Action, claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 6,160,361 to Giannopoulos ("Giannopoulos"). Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Giannopoulos in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0124785 to Alexandrov ("Alexandrov"). It is respectfully submitted that claims 1-5 are allowable over Giannopoulos alone and in view of Alexandrov for at least the following reasons.

Giannopoulos shows a (emphasis added) "ballast for operating different types of lamp loads through identification of the lamp type during steady state operation of the lamp load." (See, Giannopoulos, Abstract.) Further, Giannopoulos states that (emphasis added) "[t]he ballast can power a number of different types of lamp loads through identification of the lamp type during steady state operation of the lamp load. Lamp type recognition is achieved based on a comparison of the lamp voltage and lamp current to a plurality of V-I characteristic curves. Through this comparison, the ballast can distinguish among a number of different lamp loads having the same starting voltage."

It is respectfully submitted that the method of claim 1 is not anticipated or made

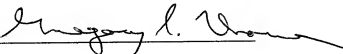
obvious by the teachings of Giannopoulos. For example, Giannopoulos does not disclose or suggest, a method that amongst other patentable elements, comprises (illustrative emphasis provided) "applying a periodic amplitude-modulated control current to a discharge lamp, detecting a highest value of the lamp voltage during a rising edge of an envelope of the modulated control current, and comparing the detected highest value with previously recorded highest values for different lamp types, and assigning the detected highest value to a lamp type on the basis of said comparison" as recited in claim 1, and as substantially recited in each of claims 2 and 6.

Based on the foregoing, the Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1, 2 and 6 are patentable over Giannopoulos and notice to this effect is earnestly solicited. Claims 3-5 and 7-9 respectively depend from one of claims 1, 2 and 6 and accordingly are allowable for at least this reason as well as for the separately patentable elements contained in each of said claims.

For example, it is respectfully submitted that Giannopoulos does not disclose or suggest, a method that amongst other patentable elements, comprises (illustrative emphasis provided) "the act of producing the periodically changing control current comprises an act of producing a periodically changing control current formed as a step-like current decrease that precedes a step-like current increase" as recited in claim 7, and as substantially recited in each of claims 8-9. Accordingly, separate consideration of each of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Applicant has made a diligent and sincere effort to place this application in condition for immediate allowance and notice to this effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosures: Request for Continued Examination (RCE)

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